

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Captain Jeff DeVere
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

*****For Immediate Release*****

Date: February 26, 2008
Contact: Melissa Van Gorkom
Phone: (360) 753-3697

WSP Reminds Drivers to Use Proper Lighting on Moving Vehicles

The Washington State Patrol reminds drivers to check the label of a lighting device before buying and installing it to make sure that the light is approved for street use.

Washington State law outlines that all vehicle lighting, including after-market lighting, must meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) 108 for street use in order to be legal to put on a vehicle in Washington State. If a manufacturer has met these lighting standards, their product should be labeled as meeting the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) or FMVSS standards.

All vehicles are required to have two headlights on the front of the vehicle that are white in color and most vehicles are required to have turn signals on the front of the vehicle that are amber in color. The headlights must be installed according to the state and federal regulations which state: they must be installed not more than fifty-four inches nor less than twenty-four inches (measured from the center of the light to the ground); and there cannot be an aftermarket styling ornament or other feature (such as tinted plastic or glass covers, a grill or slotted cover) in front of the headlamp or any other lighting device installed on motor vehicles.

All aftermarket lighting (replacement bulbs or headlights) must have the same functionality as the lighting originally installed. If additional lighting (fog lights, auxiliary driving lights, etc.) are installed, they too must be approved for road use, and must not interfere with the ability of the required equipment (headlights and turn signal) to meet safety standards. If the lights are approved, then they can be installed provided that they are installed according to requirements set forth in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 46.37.180.

"It is important for drivers to make sure that they have the proper safety equipment installed correctly on their vehicles before driving," explained WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "Auxiliary or aftermarket lighting may confuse or distract motorists or pedestrians, creating a greater risk for collisions on our roadways. For these reasons, drivers need to ensure that the lighting being installed meets the specific parameters outlined in law."

The WSP takes this issue very seriously, and takes enforcement action whenever appropriate under the law and based on the situation presented. In 2007, the WSP stopped 96,437 vehicles with lighting violations resulting in just over 30,000 citations or written warnings. If you have illegal lighting installed on your vehicle, the driver may be subject to a fine of \$124.

###

Note for reporters: Below, for your convenience, is a list of Washington laws which were referred to in the above release. These laws may be accessed in their entirety at www.leg.wa.gov/LawsAndAgencyRules/

The following Revised Codes of Washington (RCW's) pertain to headlamps:

- 46.37.020 – When lighted lamps and signaling devices are required
- 46.37.030 – Visibility distance and mounted height of lamps
- 46.37.040 – Headlamps on motor vehicles
- 46.37.070 – Stop lamps and electric turn signals required
- 46.37.200 – Stop lamps and electric turn signal displays
- 46.37.180 – Spot lamps and auxiliary lamps

The following Washington Administrative Codes (WAC's) pertain to headlamps:

- 204-10-020 – Lighting devices
- 204-72 – Standards for mounting, adjusting and aiming of lamps

The FMVSS information may be viewed by accessing <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/administration/fmcsr/fmcsrruletext.asp?section=571.108>.